

work must have been considerable, but people don't think of those things.'

As Mrs. Sanford predicted, the donation came within one vote of being unanimous. Mr. Sanford made his usual plea for cash payment, but when he sat down the plans for the annual event went on. As usual, John Gray suggested that 'Brother Sanford be appointed to gather the gifts,' and as usual the motion carried. After a few desultory remarks, the meeting adjourned, and the minister, who saw from his study window the lights extinguished one by one, gave a little sigh of regret, for he knew the result of the meeting as well as if he had been present.

'Going to town, Mr. Sanford?' called James Miles. 'Wait a minute, and I'll ride up with you.'

'This is lucky for me,' observed Mr. Sanford, as the light waggon sped over the smooth road. 'Brother Gray gave his donation in potatoes, and, as Mr. Lennox had raised more than he can use, I'm taking them to the grocery. I'll have help to unload them now, for they're always so busy at the Bee Hive that I don't like to ask assistance.'

'Did you raise these potatoes on a side hill, where the rain washed all the dirt off?' inquired the proprietor of the Bee Hive, opening a sack and taking a handful of sun-burnt tubers of various sizes. 'They don't look much like the ones you sold me last week.'

'They are not mine,' exclaimed Mr. Sanford. 'John Gray gave them as his donation to the minister. He said they are worth six dollars.'

'I can't afford to give more than forty cents a bushel. Tell John Gray to pay his church debts with potatoes like he brought me to pay his grocery bill, and I'll double the price I can pay for this trash. I'm glad I don't belong to church if that is the way the members act.'

'I guess you needn't call for my apples,' said Mr. Miles, as the wagon was turned toward home. 'I've concluded to give cash,' and he laid a ten dollar bill in Mr. Sanford's hand.

'James, you see how it is,' said Mr. Sanford, earnestly. 'Can't you help a little to do away with these abominable donations?'

'I'll do what I can. I've been blind and selfish like all the rest, but it is never too late to mend. Here, I'll double my gift to pay for former years,' and another bill went into his friend's hand.

'I do hope Mr. Sanford will call for our fruit this week,' said Mrs. Charles Miles to her husband the next day. 'The pears are getting a little too soft. If Mrs. Lennox had them now she could can them, for they are just right. I'll fix up that suit of Willie's that I intend to send, and you'd better drive down with the things yourself, Charles.'

'How would you like for Willie to wear another boy's cast-off clothes, Mary?'

'Why, not at all, but minister's families are used to such things.'

'The more shame to us, then. Brother Jim rode in with Mr. Sanford when he sold the potatoes John Gray sent the minister, and he said the grocer said he was glad he didn't belong to church. Jim told Mr. Sanford not to come for his stuff, and gave him the money, instead. I'm going to do that, too, so you can send Willie's clothes to the Widow Briggs or make carpet rags of them. I'm glad Jim told me before those pears got to the Bee Hive for they

would have ruined my reputation on fruit.'

'I don't see what right Mr. Sanford had to sell the potatoes.'

'Mr. Lennox raised his own potatoes this year, and couldn't use them. I'm glad it happened just as it did, for if outsiders judge us by our works, the church will never make any progress. Jim gave twenty dollars, and we can do as well to make up for lost time.'

One cold raw day in November several of the Oak Ridge customers of the Bee Hive were sitting by the comfortable coal fire preparatory to taking the cold drive home, when in walked Mr. Sanford loaded with baskets. 'How do you do?' said the proprietor cordially 'What is it to-day? Dried apples or ancient cheese?'

'Neither. It is some honey that looks lovely and—'

'Well, I'll taste it, anyway. It is best to be on the safe side. Whew! Just try that! The bees that made that stuff must have fed on sour apple pomace or—'

'No, they didn't,' said a man appearing from behind the barrels that separated the two big rooms. 'Joe Sanford, I consider this a mean, dirty trick.'

'Now, look here, Ben Jackson,' said the big grocer, 'you are altogether too rash. Did you hear your name mentioned? Since you have confessed that the honey came from your farm, I'll say that I consider it a mean, dirty trick to pay your honest debts with trash that you couldn't sell in any grocery.'

'He's right, Ben,' put in another man. 'We are disgracing the church by such doings. I suppose you have my chickens out in your waggon, Brother Sanford. I'll take them back with me and give you this instead,' fumbling among the bills in his pocket book.

'What's the matter with them, Bill?' inquired the grocer. 'The last donation chickens I bought I thought of putting in a brooder by the stove. They were so small.'

'Well,' admitted the man, 'they are not any too heavy, but I calculated they'd grow. Better take your honey along, Brother Jackson. We'll know more next time.'

'I'm going to take my name off the church books right away,' said Brother Jackson, angrily. 'We've always had donations, and if—'

'Well, there's one comfort,' said the grocer, 'the minister won't have any more honey if you leave the church. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good!'

'How faithful Mr. and Mrs. Sanford are,' said Mrs. Lennox to her husband, as they set out with their two children to spend the evening at the hospitable farm house. 'They will be missed at Oak Ridge when they are called to their reward. I always like to visit them, for it seems so home-like by their old-fashioned fireplace.'

'Yes, and they always make us welcome in such a delightful way. They are never too busy or tired to work for the Master, and I sometimes fear we impose upon them in the church. How hard he has worked this fall at that donation.'

'And how little real good it has done. Do you know, Herbert, I am wicked enough to wish donations had never been thought of? Don't be shocked, dear. I'm bound to have a pleasant time this evening, and don't want anything to spoil it. You don't blame me very much, do you?'

'I can echo that wish without thinking it a bit wicked, my dear. I wonder why

the Sanford house is lit from top to bottom. It looks like a party to me.'

A moment later it seemed as if the entire congregation was talking and shaking hands at once, for the big rooms were filled with happy people, and everyone pressed forward to speak to the minister and his wife. By degrees the explanation came, and it was late before the delightful evening came to a close. The young folks had charge of the dining-room, and a dainty, but substantial supper was served.

The host and hostess were particularly happy that night, and as Mr. Lennox watched them, he thought: 'Mr. Sanford is glad to have the donation over for another year, and I am, too. He is getting too feeble to haul heavy boxes and barrels and help lift them besides.'

Just before the guests left for their homes, someone called on Mr. Sanford for a speech, but after a few sentences his voice broke, and Mr. Miles had to come to the rescue. 'My dear friends,' he said, 'I am not surprised that Brother Sanford is overcome with happiness this evening. He has realized his greatest earthly hope in spite of opposition, and we all rejoice with him to think his prayers are answered. We do not attempt to excuse our blind selfishness, but promise for the future to do better. To be brief—Oak Ridge has seen its last donation.'

If any reward was needed, the happy people found it in the expression of their minister as he clasped Mr. Sanford's hand and said, 'Let us pray.'

Everyday Love.

A group of little girls were telling of the love each felt for her mother; and, as the testimony went on, the strength of the statement grew, each child feeling obliged to surpass her mates. Finally, one said, positively: 'I love my mother so much I would die for her.' The impressiveness of this declaration subdued the circle. The climax had been reached. A wholesome turn was given to the situation by the quiet observation of a lady sitting near: 'It seems very strange to me that a little girl who loves her mother enough to die for her doesn't love her enough to wash the dishes for her.' We who are older and know better require just such homely reminders to bring us back from our theories to our conditions. The love that is to 'the level of every day's most common needs' is the only genuine kind. —'Congregationalist.'

• Mail Bag.

Comis Mills, N.S., Jan. 22, 1903.

Dear Sirs,—I received Bible in due time, and think it is very nice, for which receive thanks.—Your truly,
HATTIE E. DE MINGS.

Fallow Field, Ont., Feb. 14, 1903.

Dear Sirs,—I received your premium, the Bagster Bible, in due time, and wish to thank you sincerely for it. I am highly pleased with the book. Every person thinks it beautiful. Wishing you every success, and that your paper may have a wider circulation this year than ever before.—I am, yours sincerely,
MRS. A. MACKAY.

Mrs. D. Stewart, Aylmer, Que., renewing for club of 'Northern Messenger,' writes: 'We cannot get along without the 'Messenger' in our school.'

Cornwall, Ont., Feb. 17, 1903.

Gentlemen,—I received my fountain pen all right, on Feb. 7, and must say that I am perfectly satisfied with it, both as regards the quality of its writing and appearance. I thank you most heartily for it. Wishing you every success,
I am, yours sincerely,

FRANK WILLIAMSON.